

REMARKS

Claims 1-36 were pending on the May 10, 2007, mailing date of the outstanding Office Action. Claims 7, 21, 28 and 31 were withdrawn for consideration pursuant to an election of species requirement and have been canceled in this paper. Claims 25-32 have also been canceled for other reasons. Claims 1-6, 14, 19, 33 and 34 have been amended in this paper. Thus, claims 1-6, 8-20, 22-24 and 33-36 remain pending in this application.

Although the present communication may include amendments or other changes to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, the owner does not concede in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. The owner reserves the right to pursue any previously pending claims or other claims, whether broader or narrower, that are supported by the present disclosure under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, any person reviewing the prosecution history of the present application, or the prosecution history of any parent or other related application, shall not reasonably infer that any subject matter supported by the present application has been disclaimed or disavowed.

A. Status of Office Action

Claims 1-6, 8-20, 22-27, 29, 30 and 32-36 were examined in the May 10, 2007, Office Action, and all of these claims were rejected. More specifically, the claims subject to examination were rejected as follows:

(A) claims 19, 20, 22 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over U.S. Patent Publication No. US2001/0032788 ("Woodruff");

(B) claims 1-6, 8-10, 14-18 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Woodruff and U.S. Patent No. 6,436,267 ("Carl");

(C) claims 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Woodruff, Carl, and U.S. Patent No. 6,527,920 ("Mayer");

(D) claims 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Woodruff;

(E) claims 35 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Woodruff and Mayer;

(F) claims 25-27, 29, 30 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Woodruff and Mayer;

(G) claims 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,883,762 ("Calhoun") and Japanese Patent No. JP59-150094 ("Inagaki"); and

(H) claims 35 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over the combination of Calhoun, Inagaki and Mayer.

B. Response to Rejections


Claims 1-6, 8-20, 22-24 and 33-36 were rejected over Woodruff alone or in combination with Carl and/or Mayer. Claims 33 and 34 were also rejected over the combination of Calhoun and Inagaki. In addressing these rejections together, the undersigned representative would like to thank Examiner Wilkins, III, for holding a personal interview at the United States Patent and Trademark Office on October 9, 2007. The undersigned representative and the Examiner discussed (a) claims 1-6, 14, 19, 24, 33 and 34, and (b) the Woodruff, Carl, Calhoun and Mayer references. Agreement was reached that amended claims 1-6, 14, 19 and 33 overcome the prior art of record. Additionally, agreement was reached that original claim 24 overcomes the rejection based on Woodruff and Carl. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-6, 8-20, 22-27, 29, 30 and 32-36.

In light of the foregoing, all of the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the references of record. The applicants request reconsideration of

the application and respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. If Examiner Wilkins, III, has any questions or believes a teleconference would expedite prosecution of the application, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at (206) 359-3258.

Dated: October 25, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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